

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, please replace the paragraphs spanning line 31 through page 2, line 12, as follows:

The inventors are aware of no literature on the use of roles for presence systems. All of the known presence systems deal solely with the availability of users rather than with abstract concepts like roles. Roles have, however, been used in other systems that are unrelated to user communications. For example, the American National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) has investigated Role-Based Access Control (RBAC), as described in U.S. Patent #6,023,765 (Kuhn) entitled Implementation of role Based Access Control in Multi-level Secure Systems. Most of this work though relates to security and access control for groups and persons in particular roles. For presence services, SUN's iPlanet Messaging Server [Sun Microsystems] claims to support the creation of groups, users and roles but does not provide the ability to subscribe to users in particular roles. Products also exist that use roles for workflow management [see See K. Izaki, M. Takizawa, and K. Tanaka, Information flow control-Flow Control in role-based model Role-Based Model for distributed objects Distributed Objects, Proc. Int. Conf. Parallel Distributed Systems ICPADS, p 363-370, 2001" and J. Barkley, "Workflow Management Employing Role-Based Access Control". U.S. Patent #6,088,679, December 1997]. However, these products though do not leverage or reflect user availability, as is required in presence systems.